

# A SOCIALIST COMMENTARY ON COLONIAL AFFAIRS

# Venture

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## Comment

### ISLAND CONTRASTS

**M**ALTA and Cyprus, both Mediterranean defence bases, are to be the subject of round-table conferences, but in circumstances as different as one could imagine. For Malta, we hope the road is clear. Her energetic Socialist Prime Minister, Mr. Dom Mintoff, victor in the recent elections, has scored a personal triumph in London, where his reasoned persuasiveness has induced Sir Anthony Eden and his colleagues to agree to discuss the full integration of Malta with the United Kingdom, a far more radical suggestion than the offer made in the last parliament to transfer Malta from the care of the Colonial Office to the Home Office. This almost meaningless symbolism was spurned by both the main Maltese parties, Dr. Borg Olivier and his Nationalist colleagues plumping for independence within the Commonwealth—which has been rejected in London—and Mr. Mintoff and the Labour Party surmising that more was to be gained by the novel method of integration. The boldness of the idea has proved one of its main selling points.

In an anti-imperialist era, it is hard to reject the advances of even a small dependency which asks to be brought more closely into the circle, instead of stridently and incessantly proclaiming its right, if not its intention, to contract out.

Public interest will concentrate on the political change, involving the proposed election of three Maltese M.P.'s to Westminster. This is a Parliamentary innovation to be considered by representatives of all parties in the House of Commons at a conference in September. The proposal has met with varied criticisms—that three in 630 can have little influence, but might use their position to blackmail a government with a tight majority; that they would either be second-rate people or would

be wasting at Westminster time which could be used to better advantage in Malta; that it would be a precedent for places with a less good case than Malta and so on. The only places with fairly comparable claims would be Gibraltar, the Channel Isles, the Isle of Man, and conceivably Cyprus, although the parallels are by no means exact.

Small territories elsewhere in the Commonwealth would be unlikely to wish to send members to attend long sessions in London, though one of the few sound arguments for reforming the House of Lords would be that some arrangement might be made there for representatives of territories unable to stand on their own feet. The Maltese plan can work only if, as is proposed, the smaller country is, by stages, fully assimilated so that its M.P.'s have a genuine interest in the general discussions on British economic, social and foreign policy. The House of Commons would rightly resent the introduction of members who were different in kind from other M.P.'s. But, as Sir Anthony Eden himself said, where Malta is concerned, the proposal is imaginative and, as Mr. Mintoff insists, should be looked at and, we believe, accepted on its own merits.

Malta has, in addition, the unique historical claim that she deliberately chose to side with Britain against Napoleon and that the subsequent Association was not due to conquest, but to voluntary alliance.

The background to Mr. Mintoff's initiative, however, is economic as much as political. Malta faces an economic crisis, at present partly concealed by War Damage grants, which she cannot resolve without external aid. The interim report prepared by Dr. Balogh and Mr. Dudley Seers, at the request of the Maltese Government, on the economic problems of Malta brings out very plainly the fact that the dependence of Malta upon the United Kingdom (and now also N.A.T.O.) defence expenditure, which has been so charac-



teristic in the past, is still as marked as ever. With a population which, at its present rate of increase, might double itself in 25 years, some degree of emigration is essential. But to rely solely on emigration, apart from the practical difficulties, is a completely defeatist solution, as the report clearly demonstrates.

It is mainly the young and the skilled men who leave. To train them and assist their emigration, £2.6 million has been spent in the past six years, a sum which, devoted to local development, would have greatly strengthened the economy. There is a lack of skilled workers in Malta, and one of the local grievances is the number of skilled men brought from Britain at enhanced rates of pay. Far fewer women emigrate than men and little is done to train those who are left. Malta has all the characteristics of a depressed area, with 'defence' instead of coal as her basic industry. The government has remained solvent only through British contributions, and this fact combined with lack of local initiative, has resulted in the neglect of technical education, and failure to tackle fundamental problems such as water supply, electricity distribution and harbour improvements.

The present Labour Government has the will to face these problems and to deal with taxation reform, in a way which its opponents are not disposed to do. This in itself is a reason for seizing the moment to adjust relationships. Mr. Mintoff's proposals, on which his party fought the election, include ultimate parity for Malta in U.K. taxation as well as in U.K. social services. The recent London talks have resulted in an interim agreement which will ensure government revenue, but this only tides things over and the basic problems remain, including a long overdue adjustment in the terms on which British service establishments enjoy the use of land and buildings in Malta, not to mention public services such as roads and water.

All these matters could be settled amicably, given the will to do so. If they are not settled, a rot will set in and Malta will go sour. If the moment is seized, and a sound agreement reached in September and subsequently ratified in the promised referendum in Malta, a most interesting and fruitful experiment in Commonwealth relationships could begin.

### Cyprus

WHILE the outlook for Malta is hopeful, the Cyprus problem has been so much bedevilled by past history and recent government bungling that no easy success is possible. At long last, Sir Anthony Eden has called the Greek and Turkish governments into direct consultation, the British contention, legally correct, that Cyprus was no-

body's business but ours having led merely to frustration and rioting. But we may well ask if this new effort will lead anywhere. Greece and Turkey are traditional foes; each has a loyalty to its own group of Cypriots. The only excuse for British intransigence over Cyprus is the defence argument. There are other good reasons why we may consider absorption by Greece undesirable and not in the best interests of the Cypriots themselves, but one cannot stand in their way on these lesser grounds. The defence argument, however, is not a matter for Britain alone. It is really a N.A.T.O. problem, and other N.A.T.O. countries, not least the United States, are just as much concerned. Both Greece and Turkey are members of N.A.T.O., but it is not primarily in that capacity that they are being called into conference.

It seems both urgent and desirable to separate N.A.T.O. considerations from the desire of Cyprus for self-determination. If that were done, an arrangement might be made for a condominium for a period of, say, 20 years of Greece and Britain, the latter acting not as an independent imperial power, but as the agent of N.A.T.O. Then some progress might be made with internal political advance in Cyprus, which has been held up through the popular boycott of proffered constitutions, with a promise to reconsider the whole situation at the end of a stated period, as with the Sudan condominium. This solution would not appeal to the Communists, but it seems to offer the best hope of a reasonable settlement.

### Mauritius

THE Mauritian Delegation, all party, led by Dr. Ramgoolam, Labour, consists of eight members of Legislative Council. It is now in London discussing further constitutional advance. There are four Labour members, two Mauritian Party (Conservative) and two independents.

At the last election, in October, 1953, the Mauritian Labour Party won 13 of the 19 elected seats. The Legislative Council also includes 12 nominated members and three officials, making a total of 34 members.

The Labour Party is pressing for more elected representatives in Legislative Council, and they are likely to be successful. There is also the question of 'liaison officers,' a kind of substitute Minister, a constitutional device that does not exist in any other colony. Labour members such as Dr. Ramgoolam, Education, and Mr. Seenevassen, Health, are attached to departments to learn the job from senior civil servants. They speak for their departments in the Legislative Council, answer questions and wind-up debates occasionally. But

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# The East Africa Royal Commission Report

by The Rt. Hon. A. J. Creech Jones, M.P.

THIS substantial report<sup>1</sup> has received a critical reception, and in the next few months the London and East Africa Governments will be examining and determining what should be done about its recommendations. Undoubtedly the Report is a challenge and will have, for good or ill, an influence on policy for a long time to come. Some of its conclusions we believe to be right, but some of its assumptions are of doubtful validity; certain recommendations seem to be undesirable and politically impracticable.

The Commissioners were asked to study the whole of East Africa, but it is obvious that the problems of Kenya were constantly uppermost in their minds. They were required to leave constitutional matters alone, but many of their recommendations inevitably have a significance which prevents any separation of economic and social matters from political. They were excluded from study of the allocation of land, but its implications could not be evaded. They were concerned primarily with an agrarian problem and how to raise living standards in East Africa and turn its resources to better account.

The broad conclusion reached is that the economy of the territories should be transformed from one of subsistence to free exchange, that the reservations of land and the preservation of the tribal system of tenure stultify all efforts to expand production and improve living standards, and that the advantages of civilised living cannot be built up on tribal custom and practice but must be based on greater economic specialisation and deliberate development of both internal and external resources, and freer economy should be established by abandoning existing boundaries and restrictions, encouraging investment and new enterprise from outside, and breaking down racial and tribal discriminations. Throughout the Report runs a dislike of state protection and regulation, of state enterprises and marketing, of state controls and organisation of almost every kind. A policy of protection and restriction they think may have had, in the past, its virtues and been based on practical considerations. But to-day it is inadequate and misconceived, for it paralyses development and prevents standards from rising. In fact, racial discrimination and state intervention impede economic progress which is urgently required in East Africa to-day.

The Commissioners entertain few fears about the

increasing population of East Africa if a free and expanding economy is adopted. They recognise that there are crowded areas in the reserves and towns. But they are satisfied that the difficulties in these vast areas are not necessarily due to an increasing population but to primitive cultivation at subsistence level and the strait-jacket which government protection zeal has placed upon the economy. The size of the population, in fact, is no more than is necessary to meet the requirements of a modern economy.

## Where the Report Fails

Now the assumption that social and economic progress results from the free play of the markets and from a policy of free enterprise without public responsibility is, in the conditions of the modern world, unsound and false to experience. To expose Africans to the harsh consequences of an economic revolution, to deny them the protection and safeguards which are necessary when they meet the impact of a difficult and rougher economy and to forget the experience in Britain of the Enclosure movement and industrial revolution, is to betray the confidence of Africans in Britain and to create confusion and needless suffering in the respective territories.

It is true that the Commissioners recognise that there are no short cuts to secure the drastic changes called for, and their proposals are tempered by some degree of government direction, some control of pace and of supervision. None-the-less the emphasis is on a break up of traditional practice and regulation and the establishment of specialised production and greater facilities for exchange of goods and services and for an unrestrained and free economy. Such changes are likely to create some economic conflict. To carry through a revolution in land tenure in the African reserves, to remove tribal boundaries and permit of a commercial exchange of land, to uproot customary arrangements, whether in the tribe or between tribes and individuals, is to deprive a great number of people of security and stability and to intensify the social and economic problems of the urban areas.

It is undoubtedly important to remove the discrimination against Africans in the holding of land in the European Highlands and to insist that all land should be properly utilised and comply with reasonable standards of husbandry, but it is a far different thing to remove certain of the frontiers between tribes such as the Masai and Kikuyu and

<sup>1</sup> Command 9475. H.M.S.O., 17s. 6d.



a no less difficult thing to bring about quickly the revolution in cultivation and stock-keeping on which higher standards depend. The Commission deliberately wish to see discarded 'those administrative devices which serve only to perpetuate an obsolete conception of self-sufficiency or which merely promote a sectional interest.'

The introduction of more industry and mining also has its dangers. The Africans of Uganda have already expressed their apprehension, and the effects in Northern Rhodesia are not particularly edifying when certain social and political results are taken into account. There must be deliberate state planning of the economic life of these African territories if a proper balance is to be preserved and the destructive effects of industrialisation and mining avoided.

The Commission has sound views about establishing village life for the squatters of the Highlands, about urban development (though not about housing), about the practice of co-operation in agriculture, and about regulating conditions of employment. It is less sure when it talks about trade unionism.

There are many problems raised in the Report to which we shall return. This is no more than an introductory note on a Report of immense importance which should be studied by everyone concerned with the future of East Africa.

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#### Comment—continued from page 2.

they have no executive responsibility. The Labour Party is therefore pressing for a step forward, asking for the appointment of responsible Ministers, who shall have a voice in shaping policy and in taking decisions as, for instance, in British Honduras. The third important question is that of the franchise. At present there is a literacy test. The Labour Party alleges that the test can be, and often is, too severe. Their strength is drawn from the masses of plantation workers, chiefly in the sugar industry and, racially, mainly Indo-Mauritian, although they are often supported by coloured workers of African descent and Sino-Mauritians. The Hindu community are approximately 70 per cent. of the population, but only some 25 per cent. are over 21 years of age, literate, and therefore qualified to vote. The Labour Party are pressing for adult suffrage without any literacy test. This demand is resisted by the Mauritian Party and the conservative elements, including the Chinese, who fear that the Colony might follow the pattern of British Guiana and even suggest that the Mauritian Labour Party are working for eventual annexation by India. This accusation appears to be ill-founded and against the economic interest of the Mauritian workers.

The Labour Party delegates are moderate in their demands since they do not expect full adult franchise before 1961. They need time to organise and educate their followers.

#### Uganda Agreement

Many months of patient talk and numerous journeys between Kampala and Whitehall preceded the agreement by which it is hoped that the Kabaka will return to Buganda and Buganda will play its full part in a united Uganda. Except for one or two minor clashes in and around Kampala, and a shops boycott which fizzled out, the dispute between the Baganda and the Government has been carried on in the most gentlemanly fashion, the final stages reaching such a degree of amiability that the Colonial Secretary declared to the House of Commons what a pleasure it had been to work with such people. Much of the credit is due to the Kabaka himself and the Lukiko, who have been restrained and dignified throughout; to the Governor, whose good intentions have shone through, despite his initial fumbling, and to the distinguished advisers, Sir Keith Hancock, Mr. Diplock and Mr. Dingle Foot, who have helped to keep matters on a high plane of principle.

It remains to be seen how things will work out, now that the dramatic interlude is drawing to a close. The two key problems have been to turn the Kabaka into a constitutional monarch, in a society in which feudal feeling, not to say superstition, runs strong, and to keep Buganda, which regards itself as something more than *primus inter pares*, within the new Uganda Government. A developing economy means that more power in some fields must be wielded at the centre. At the same time, much more authority in other directions, notably education, is being developed on the Buganda Government. But the crux of the matter is that while Buganda is governed exclusively by Africans, under the Administration, the Central Government is mixed. And Buganda wants an all African society, not a multi-racial one. Hence the trouble over the proposed Asian Minister at the centre, the one unresolved matter at the end of the conference.

While one must aim at common citizenship and thence a common roll, until that is accomplished it is not unreasonable to give representation to a major community. There is an element of anti-Asian prejudice as well as genuine political principle in the current agitation. If the aim is clearly stated, tolerance should be shown during this interim period of communal representation. It would be sad if, after settling one crisis with dignity a sordid squabble should develop over the other.



# Sierra Leone—The Riots and the Future

by J. D. Hargreaves

(Formerly on the Staff of Fourah Bay College)

THE rioting in Freetown in February, 1955, in which 18 people were killed, came as a shock to those who know Sierra Leone. This small territory, though its economic growth and political development have been less spectacular than in the Gold Coast, had seemed likely to escape such conflicts. The worst antagonisms arising from the Colony-Protectorate division are diminishing rapidly, and should die out altogether with the older generation of Creoles; and even if progress in certain directions had seemed likely to be slow and to encounter special difficulties, it had at least seemed likely to be peaceful. The many hopeful features of the country's life have not, of course, been obliterated by four days' rioting in the capital; but the recent report of a Commission of Inquiry<sup>1</sup> does raise some disturbing questions.

It is disconcerting, in a territory which prides itself on its trade unions and its machinery for the settlement of industrial disputes, that the leader of the most important 'General' Union should be described as 'ambitious, unscrupulous and worthless'; and that there should be signs of attempts during a strike to sabotage the public services of Freetown (by whom, the Commissioners do not suggest). It is disconcerting to read of the lack of organisation or financial control in the office of the Artisans and Allied Workers Union, and of the deep ignorance shown by the Union secretary of conciliation and arbitration procedures which he had welcomed, on behalf of his Union, in 1947.<sup>2</sup> But, as has been pointed out elsewhere the report contains no real explanation of Mr. Grant's considerable influence among Freetown workers, nor of why, since its publication, a mass meeting of his union should express continued confidence in his leadership. Clearly, something has gone very wrong with labour relations in Sierra Leone since the work of Mr. Edgar Parry, who was Commissioner of Labour immediately after the war, and Mr. Siaka Stevens, who was then Secretary of the Mineworkers Union. Conceivably, if the Commission

had contained a Trade Union representative he might have suggested more about the reasons for this.

'The folly of one man' may indeed have been the moving cause of the strike, and so of the riots, but there must clearly be deeper causes of discontent. The background to the wages claim of the Unions was a steep rise in the cost of living, attributed here partly to a bad harvest, and partly to the drift of labour from the rice-farms in search of the fantastic fortunes which can be made by illegal diamond-digging and trading. Dear and scarce food inevitably weighs heaviest on the people of Freetown—the unemployed or casually-employed proletariat, as well as the unskilled or lowly-skilled workers who were technically in dispute, and on whom the burden of supporting many dependants often falls. Negotiations in the Joint Industrial Councils were drawn out over five months, largely in order to eliminate frivolous proposals from each side; during this time the law-abiding worker must often have compared his basic 3s. 9d. a day with the diamond fortunes of his countrymen, which have produced a minor boom in Humber cars. The Commissioners do not make this point so bluntly, but they do recognise that the present distribution of Sierra Leone's national income is 'not a healthy one.' Indeed, somewhat extending their terms of reference, they suggest that the object of wages policy ought perhaps to be, not merely to keep abreast of the cost of living, but gradually to try and 'improve the standards of life.' Fabians can only applaud this conclusion.

## The Political Situation

The rioting also suggests some reflections about the country's political development. Since December, 1951, primary, but not ultimate, responsibility for government policy has come to rest with the six Ministerial members of the Sierra Leone People's Party (S.L.P.P.)—the first party to aspire to offer truly national representation, and to avoid the dominance of the tribal peoples of the Protectorate by the more sophisticated folk of Freetown and the small 'Colony' area in its immediate hinterland. As administrators, some of the Ministers have won much respect; as national leaders, the events of February give the measure of their failure. Mr. Siaka Stevens, probably the most eminent trade unionist in West Africa, was unable as Minister of Lands, Mines and Labour, to secure the operation of industrial conciliation procedures which he himself had formerly worked so hard to introduce. His house, and those of his two colleagues, were attacked by rioters, many of whom may be presumed to be of Protectorate origin. Such events confirm what many have long

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Strike and Riots in Freetown, Sierra Leone, during February 1955. Government Printer, Freetown, 2s. 6d. The Commissioners were Sir John Shaw, Mr. Justice Acolatse and Mr. G. G. Honeyman.

<sup>2</sup> One passage of Mr. Grant's evidence may indeed cause some heart-searching about the effects which I.L.O. study courses may have. . . . I was in England . . . when the electricity workers went on strike and the precedent was set there; they were on strike and they refused to go to arbitration and in one of the classes at Clapham it was discussed and the workers were against going to arbitration.' It may not be fanciful to suggest that the class at Clapham sowed the seed of Mr. Grant's remarkable misapprehensions about the industrial situation in Sierra Leone.

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# WHAT THE COLONIES

*Further replies to the Fabian Colonial B*

## UGANDA

**A Uganda correspondent at present in England writes:—**

**'T**HE main objectives in my opinion of the British colonial policy to-day are to bring the Colonies to self-determination gradually, and to make them economically strong, which is true in a sense, but the application, and putting it over to the people concerned is sometimes wrong, or misunderstood, and the outcome is suspicion.

Generally they are not realised: (a) because of the wrong impression and behaviour of some people who are regarded as representatives of the British way of life or Her Majesty's Government; (b) because of the misinterpretation of intentions by the peoples themselves.

In my territory they should be realised, but the suppressing of free expression, both recently and at the beginning of the trouble, led to the curbing of good leaders who would lead the people straight, and brought forward those who are nursing grievances and who are seeking power, who I think will never speak well of any policy, nor think straight.

I agree to these objectives if only they were not ruined by both sides.

I am an advocate of Parliamentary democracy, but I would not say "as practised in England" for they are different problems which confront the different territories, which are not in England, if I may say so.

I should not regard a political party or institution of any kind if it preached otherwise.

I want my own country to remain in the Commonwealth after it has attained Self-Government.

I could not say I am satisfied with the present methods of consultation within the Commonwealth, for I have no choice; to those who have the choice I hope this method is satisfactory, for there has not of late been any complaint I know of against this method.

The features of the United Kingdom way of life with respect to industrial organisation and social services I should like to see introduced in my country are: the furtherance of education through Community Centres; Social Clubs and all other Youth Organisations by occasional grants from the Department of Education, Milk and Egg Industries!!

I believe that my territory needs financial assistance for development, but it should not be given through the agency of the United Nations, but it should be given through companies of long experience, who have the interest in the people where it is operating and who would make plans for getting the people concerned into its establishment for training. The question of some countries always having governmental officers gets people down; it is time some private concerns joined with the people concerned!

The inducement I would offer is a "fifty-fifty"

basis of European companies of good repute joining with African organisations; here again the need comes for a United Parliament with equal representation. The Government has to be assured that these European companies of long experience do not use the opportunity to exploit the others of lesser knowledge and no experience, e.g. hire purchasing. . .

Formal organisational links should be established, by the Labour Party in my territory, on the understanding that it has to show the people how to play the political organ, and that there are two sides to anything.'

## TANGANYIKA

**From the President of the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union:—**

**'T**HE main objectives of the colonial policy are to provide investment for British capital and employment for British citizens abroad; to secure a market for British goods; to extend the English sphere of influence and the English-speaking world; to increase production and raise the standard of life among the Colonial peoples.

In this territory the main objectives are as above with the emphasis on removing Tanganyika from the Trust protective influence to a straight colonial status directly under the Colonial Office.

I disagree with the emphasis and the order in which these objectives are implemented, and feel that the welfare of the local inhabitants should also come first and foremost, and that the general atmosphere and relationship should be such that more British officers overseas should be welcome and feel welcome to stay as inhabitants after their period of service is over.'

He further says he is prepared to see his local institutions make way for parliamentary democracy provided there is a gradual change and that some respect is paid to the traditional customs. He feels that this must be a gradual process in this country where there are many primitives . . . and that there should be a deliberate policy of political education, more especially among the Chiefs.

He would be content to remain in the Commonwealth, provided the Commonwealth pattern does not deteriorate, so as to allow the South African influence to predominate. In short, to him the British way of life is more attractive than remaining in the Commonwealth without having to apologise for some of the political and social manifestations of South Africa and other parts, which make the Commonwealth very often a meaningless farce.

Of features of English life, he likes 'Minimum Wage, Joint Industrial and other Boards, Health Services, Juvenile Training Centres, Trade Unionism as such.'

He wants financial assistance through the United Nations, and would accept political advice not political control, in connection with it.



# ANK OF BRITISH POLICY

## Questionnaire from Overseas Territories

He thinks the Labour Party's policy has been beneficial to colonial peoples except for East Africa, and for the Federation of East and Central Africa, and is agreeable to political links with the Labour Party and the Socialist International.

### NYASALAND

**From a Teacher active in public affairs:—**

'THE British colonial policy appears to me to be to lead the colonial peoples towards self-government and self-determination within the Commonwealth, economically and politically. If we examine events in the Gold Coast, Sudan and other colonial territories, the above policy seems to be attaining a certain measure of realisation.

In Nyasaland here, it is not. In an attempt to win the European minority to their side, the British Government is confusing issues by ignoring the wishes and basic aspirations of the vast African majority, pandering to the interests of empty phrases like "racial harmony," partnership and the like. The forgotten factor is that racial harmony will ever remain unattainable until the Africans are accorded social, political and economic equality, e.g. in the Civil Service, the franchise, a place in the Executive Council, etc.

I agree with the main objectives, but, as I say, the practice in Nyasaland does not seem to accord with theory.

The British parliamentary system is the only hope for survival of civilisation in the world and should be introduced in dependent territories with more expedition than is the case. Naturally, a dependent territory will require a written constitution with, perhaps, certain guarantees enshrined in it to safeguard minorities, e.g. Indians, Europeans, Chiefs, etc.

Social and political institutions (i.e. local institutions) will, whether we like it or not, surely go some day. Where these are in conflict with what we consider to be the best in democracy, they will be abandoned all, in an evolutionary rather than in a revolutionary manner, to prevent social disintegration.

While private enterprise should not be discouraged, co-operative movements and public corporations and national enterprise should be accorded a definite place in Nyasaland. This will help Africans who have little or no capital of their own to be associated with any industrial scheme to be set.

Nyasaland's financial needs should, I think, be met by the assistance of the United Kingdom Government in co-operation with the colonial Government here. We should be chary of foreign help. I suggest that there should be no political control at all. Definite privileges, e.g. trade, marketing facilities, should, however, be accorded to the U.K. If this cannot be accepted, the assistance should come as a loan to be repaid over a period of years or in kind.

Private investment from outside should be restricted. The question of industrial and commercial expansion will mean European immigration and Africans are very much afraid of losing their land rights with increased European population. The answer appears to be in training Africans to work out the natural resources of the land.

Apart from the mistake the Labour Party made in initiating the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland which the Conservatives imposed on the discontented Africans, thus forfeiting the ray of confidence the Africans have had in the British Government, the Labour Party is most acceptable to Nyasaland Africans. It was the Labour Party that introduced African members in the Legislative Council here; during its term of office we saw the birth of co-operative movements which have had great success but which are not being given the necessary encouragement and assistance at the moment. I am speaking the mind of Nyasaland Africans when I say that should Labour return to power again, a larger share in the government of this country of Africans may be hoped for.'

### NORTHERN RHODESIA

**A correspondent lists British objectives:—**

'Colonial fascism; political domination to the advantages of the white settlers; economic monopoly and exploitation by the whites; alienation of land to the Europeans and Afrikaners; denial of full rights of collective bargaining to Africans; the full rights of educational democracy denied to indigenous Africans; colour discrimination with the backing of the Government in a more pronounced manner; social bar as another principal objective in this country; denial of political advancement to Africans democratically.'

Features of United Kingdom life which appeal to him are:—

Free trade union movements; rights of workers to participate in the affairs of the country as a whole; unemployment benefits; old age pensions; widows' pensions; minimum standard of living; family allowances; compensation of a lay-off against the employers; comprehensive health services; high technical professional and academic education regardless of colour, creed, sex, or nationality; comprehensive recreation facilities.

But he adds:—'The main objectives of the British colonial policy are: to deter or try by some means to hamper the spirit of determination towards self-rule of the indigenous inhabitants of the Colonies. They are trying by all means to lower the living standards of the natives so much as to make them too inferior in contrast to those of a European as such that there can be gained ground for denial of granting self-rule to them.'



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suspected: that the S.L.P.P. has failed to become, in any real sense, a party of the people. So far, constitutional change at the centre has meant chiefly the passing of an important degree of responsibility into the hands of limited groups of politically-conscious Africans—broadly speaking, chiefs, intellectuals, and traders, of whom the two former are most strongly represented in the S.L.P.P. Not only is the constitution oligarchic, but the present social and educational state of the country must make any constitution tend to oligarchy.

Even sadder conclusions may be drawn from the Shaw Report about the state of opposition politics. The National Council of Sierra Leone, the vehicle of Creole particularism, seems more than ever to be played out; its leaders appear in a curious dual role, anxious to claim that their advice was influential with the strike leaders, but doubly anxious to disclaim responsibility for the riots. And there are some disturbing hints that other Freetown politicians, may have tried to capitalise the grievances of the Freetown poor in very unscrupulous ways. In Freetown, as in

every other African city, there are great destructive forces latent which offer the most ready and obvious means of altering the balance of political power.

The future political stability of Sierra Leone must clearly depend on the masses in the Protectorate adjusting themselves to their projected role in the political institutions of Western type which are being so rapidly introduced. If the proposals of last year's Keith-Lucas Commission are carried out, universal suffrage will be introduced throughout the country in 1961. It is difficult to see what else that Commission could have proposed, but the effects of this rather sudden change might well not be as expected. Over the greater part of the Protectorate, both formal education and national political consciousness are still restricted to relatively small groups of people; unlike the C.P.P. in the Gold Coast, the S.L.P.P. so far has done relatively little to fill either gap (though Mr. Albert Margai's plan for the extension of formal education is boldly conceived). If the future electors are not prepared for citizenship, the institutions of political democracy might only permit unscrupulous men to gain power more easily. The February days give a first small warning of their possible methods.

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It would be easy to dismiss the book at that point, or to list the detailed inaccuracies which build up into a false picture. But the trouble is that a great deal of what Mr. Koinange has written is true, and that all of it must appear to be true to him and to many other Africans, as it has been accepted as true by the Americans financing this publication. His picture is no more distorted than that presented by the other extreme minority, the fanatical Europeans, who regard Michael Blundell as only some degrees less dangerous than Kenyatta. In the horrible conditions of Kenya as it was and is, it is not surprising—though it is tragic and disappointing—that the effective Kikuyu leaders saw no good in the feeble attempts of Government to better the conditions of their people, till they were finally driven back to denying any good in European culture itself. Thus a nationalist movement which by its nature should be liberal and progressive in spirit has been befouled and diverted into barbaric reaction, and has become a wicked thing which even those who see the need for a national movement are now compelled to oppose.

There is little consolation, either, for Socialists in blaming the settlers. A Labour Government was in power during the period in which Mau Mau was being nurtured. When it went out of office, the land question had not been solved, political power was still overwhelmingly in the hands of Europeans, and educated Africans were still subject to humiliation for the crime of being black. Steps had been taken to end all of these evils, but they were too late. Whether they would have been too late even in 1945 is an open question—many readers of this book and of Kenyatta's "Facing Mount Kenya," first published in 1938, will conclude that this was the case, but the fact remains that nobody in the Labour movement

was able to convince the Kenya Africans that the Labour Government was sincere, as it was. The small group of Socialists who believe that every African is invariably right made no attempt (in public, whatever they may have done in private) to support their own Government; the equally small group who understood their Ministers' intentions were unable to rally sufficient political support for their policy, to secure modifications of it in the light of African opinion, or to establish a working basis of co-operation with African leaders. The Fabian failure to achieve this co-operation may in the long run have been a factor of tragic significance. Every Fabian should read this book and check it against the facts as they appeared to our Ministers and as they were expounded in official statements.

It is not necessary or wise to make moral judgments on the past. If the Labour Government failed, so did the leaders of the Kenya African Union. But there is a lesson to be learnt. Even if the Government of Kenya had been patently honest and determined in promoting African advancement, it could not have succeeded without the full and effective participation of the African population. This in itself implies that the Africans of Kenya, like those of West Africa, have not only a right to be heard but something to say to which the imperial power should listen, not merely because it is safer to listen, but because there is something worthy of a hearing. This is the real white man's burden—the need to learn as well as to teach. If he cannot learn better than those who have been nurtured in a socially backward society, his failure is proportionately greater than theirs. The British people were told this by Burke just 167 years ago: 'We have more versatility of character and manners, and it is we who must conform.' That is still true.



# TWO AFRICANS

by Marjorie Nicholson

THE first essential for a colonial nationalist leader is to break the psychological dependence of his people on the ruling power. It is not easy to do this, especially if the ruling power is reasonably humane in outlook or if the changes it effects in the life of the country are manifestly beneficial. The perfect colonial leader is able to examine the gains and losses objectively, even though he may find it necessary to appear far from objective when speaking to his people. The lesser man will see only the evil—the intolerable intellectual and emotional burden of having all decisions ultimately taken by persons who do not share his cultural background.

The ruling power also is in considerable difficulty. It would not be the ruling power unless it was basically stronger and more adaptable than the Colony it controls. Its most enlightened men, including those who genuinely believe that it is undesirable if not wrong for one country to rule another, know that they have something of value to give and may well be irritated and almost alienated by the unattractive aspects of colonial nationalism—the claims to moral superiority which spring more often from weakness than from positive achievement, the fantastic claims to cultural continuity which attempt to link present-day backward societies with ancient civilisations, the constant vituperation which may be merely exaggerated or actually malicious. It is the job of the ruling power, if it genuinely wants to withdraw, leaving a stable free country behind it, to be honest in its objectives and to find a way to convey this honesty to the colonial peoples. It must co-operate in the very breaking of dependence which will end its own power. Despite some instances of lack of integrity, Britain has tried to do this in West Africa; in East Africa it is manifestly failing. Two books by African leaders<sup>1</sup> demonstrate the contrasting results.

Mbonu Ojike is a Nigerian who returned from the United States in 1947 convinced that the day of the English gentleman (white or black) in Nigerian politics must be ended. He cast his lot with Dr. Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, was allowed considerable licence in the press and on the platform, and fought hard for full democratic rights in the constitutional conferences of 1949-50. He is now Minister of Finance in Eastern Nigeria. He and his kind were given a chance to participate fully in shaping their country's future. They have their weaknesses in government, no doubt, but the psychological domination of an outside power is ended. That is a good thing in itself—good for Nigeria and good for Britain.

Mr. Ojike does not reject the outside world, but he believes in African dress, African names, and an education based on African traditions, for Africans. Of course he presses his points too far. Take the most interesting sentence in the book: 'In the days of freedom, he who was to become my father was born. . . . ' It is immediately preceded by a paragraph on the Long Juju of Arochuku. Freedom? Yes, Mr. Ojike would say, in the primary sense that there was no foreign rule. This is altogether too simple, but the first chapters on the author's childhood reveals just how natural it is. These are fascinating reading, African life has very many attractive features and Mr. Ojike has managed to describe them in a way which holds the reader's attention. His book should be read for itself despite the characteristic exaggerations which are the nationalist counterpart of imperialist superiority, and which he would probably not perpetrate if he were writing to-day (the book is a reprint, with additions, of a work originally published in the United States). To turn from this to Mr. Koinange's book is like entering a different world.

## Tragic Distortion

This book, banned in Kenya, is a tragedy. Mbiyu Koinange was one of the first Kenya Africans to receive higher education abroad; as the son of a Senior Chief he enjoyed wealth and prestige; as a trained and practical educationist he had a wonderful opportunity to advance his people. Having come to London in 1951 as a delegate of the Kenya African Union to present the Kenya Land Petition, he has never returned. His father and his co-delegate are in detention, his closest political associates have been convicted of Mau Mau offences, the schools he helped to found and the college of which he was principal have been closed or taken over, the Kenya African Union has been suppressed, and his people, the Kikuyu, have been shattered in civil war. What is the explanation of this gulf between promise and actuality? This book gives the answer. Here is a picture of Kenya distorted almost to the point of insanity. Mr. Koinange sees nothing good in the developments that have taken place there, even since the war; he sees only a systematic and sustained attempt to destroy every sign of African initiative till finally 'the Europeans in Kenya started . . . to fight, to destroy the schools, trading centres, vehicles and other work of Africans.' Mau Mau thus becomes a resistance movement which has won for Kenya Africans a place in the modern world, the only remaining impediment being 'those [i.e. the Government] who will not arrange a cease-fire and negotiate with people who have shed their blood for the elementary right of saying what it is they are fighting for.'

(Continued bottom of page 8)

<sup>1</sup> *My Africa* by Mbonu Ojike (Blandford Press, 10s. 6d.) and *The People of Kenya Speak for Themselves* by Mbiyu Koinange (Kenya Publications Fund, Detroit, U.S.A., 25c. Copies obtainable from Mbiyu Koinange, 7, Winchester Road, London, N.W.3, 2s.)



# Parliament

**The Emergency in Malaya.** In reply to Mr. Awbery, Mr. Hopkinson said that the total cost of the emergency in Malaya to the end of 1954 had been in the region of £135,000,000. Of this about £83,000,000 had fallen on the Federation Government and £52,000,000 on Her Majesty's Government. The latter figure did not include the whole cost of the external Forces in Malaya, but only the estimated difference between the cost of maintaining them in Malaya and in their normal stations. Political leaders in Malaya were associated with measures taken against the terrorists through their membership of the Director of Operations Committee and of the War Executive Committee at all levels. (June 15.)

**Diamond Mining in Sierra Leone.** Mr. James Johnson asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he would end the Selection Trust monopoly of diamond mining in Sierra Leone and issue licences to individual miners. Mr. Lennox-Boyd replied that the Chief Minister of Sierra Leone and two of his colleagues were arriving shortly to discuss the whole future of diamond mining policy in Sierra Leone. Mr. John Hall asked what effect the development of illicit diamond mining in Sierra Leone was having on the economic and social life of that country. Mr. Lennox-Boyd replied that it was unfortunately the case that illicit diamond mining had caused a substantial loss of potential revenue from taxation, a decline in agricultural production, inflated prices for foodstuffs and disrespect for the law in those areas where it was prevalent. (June 22.)

**Strikes in Singapore.** Mr. Awbery asked how many official strikes had taken place in Singapore during the previous three months and in what industries; how many work-people had been involved; and what was the average hourly wage paid to these men. Mr. Lennox-Boyd replied that there had been twelve strikes over industrial disputes since the beginning of March. They had taken place in a public transport service, a saw mill, a soft drink and soap factory, the Singapore Turf Club, a shoe manufacturing company, two engineering factories, a rubber company, a brickworks and the Harbour Board, the last on two occasions. About 4,700 workers had been involved. It was customary to pay wages on a daily and not an hourly basis. The daily wage of those involved varied from three dollars to ten dollars. (June 22.)

**Co-operative Wholesale Establishment in the Gold Coast.** In reply to Mr. Coldrick, Mr. Lennox-Boyd said he was informed by the Government of the Gold Coast that the registration of the co-operative wholesale establishment had been cancelled in 1953 with the intention of reconstituting it on different lines in a way that would quicken the development of consumer societies. The establishment had at the same time been put into liquidation following an enquiry. Since then, the heavy trading losses and weakness of

most consumer societies had made it necessary to postpone its reconstitution indefinitely. The weakness of consumer societies was due to general causes, notably the extent of petty trading. Mr. Coldrick asked the Colonial Secretary if he was aware that the wholesale establishment was set up to facilitate the development of consumer societies by providing them with supplies and skill and if it was not obvious that if this establishment was not quickly set going again there would be dislocation among the consumer societies. Mr. Lennox-Boyd replied that this was a matter for which the full responsibility lay with the Gold Coast Government, but he would draw their attention to the observations which had been made. (June 29.)

**Withdrawal of African Housing Subsidy in Northern Rhodesia.** In reply to Mr. James Johnson, Mr. Lennox-Boyd said that the objects were: to reduce the financial burden, using the savings for new housing; to relieve the housing shortage by encouraging employers and Africans to build their own houses; and to impress upon employers the true cost of housing their African employees. Since the African wage earners who comprised 97 per cent. of those housed in urban areas had their rent paid in full by their employers the increase in the rent would not deprive them of any part of their wages. (June 29.)

**Disbandment of the Colonial Film Unit.** In reply to Mr. Benn, Mr. Lennox-Boyd said that the Colonial Film Unit had been disbanded because, largely owing to the success of its own pioneering work in stimulating the development of local film units overseas, the need for the advisory and training services of a central unit in London had greatly diminished. Colonial Governments had been fully consulted. Expenditure from colonial welfare and development funds for the last full year's operation of the Unit was £9,299. To assist those governments still requiring technical advice on film matters, the services had been retained in the Colonial Office of Mr. William Sellers, the former head of the Unit. (June 29.)

**Colonial Ministers and Business Directorships.** Mr. Sorensen asked how far the rule that Ministers must resign business directorships applied to all Colonial territories and what exemptions were permitted in particular cases with the reasons therefor. Mr. Lennox-Boyd replied that, on the approach of Ministerial systems in colonial territories, it had been the practice over a number of years to draw the attention of unofficial Ministers to the rules and customs which govern ministerial conduct in the United Kingdom. In general, ministers were expected to divest themselves for the period of their office of business interests which might conflict with their public responsibilities. Governors might in their discretion, subject to the public interest, waive these requirements for shorter or longer periods. (June 29.)



# Guide to Books

## The Trial of Jomo Kenyatta.

By Montagu Slater. (Secker and Warburg, 18s.)

These are the questions that the impartial observer should ask about the conviction of Jomo Kenyatta on charges of managing and being a member of the unlawful society called Mau Mau. (1) Did he get a fair trial? (2) Should he have been convicted on the evidence before the Court? (3) Was he guilty? The trial lasted more than five months and the full transcript contains 2,000 pages. A dogmatic answer to any of these questions on the basis of a 250-page summary is impossible, and that is perhaps why Mr. Slater, though he asks himself these questions does not answer them. But there is no doubt that his book is disturbing, and many readers are likely to answer the first and second questions for themselves by saying with some hesitation 'probably not.'

To begin with this was a political trial, in spite of the protestations to the contrary of Mr. Somerhough, Solicitor General, and a magistrate sitting alone without a jury, or even assessors, is the wrong tribunal for hearing such a case. More important, though the charge was serious and the issues complicated, the procedure was summary. All serious charges in this country are tried on indictment after a preliminary hearing in the Magistrates' Court, when the evidence for the prosecution is taken down in writing and preserved in what are called the depositions. The prisoner knows, therefore, before his trial begins exactly what case he has to meet, and if the prosecution wishes to call any evidence not included in the depositions, a notice of additional evidence must be served on the defence. A similar procedure is followed at a trial by Court Martial. Kenyatta, on the other hand, did not know until prosecuting counsel made his opening speech the nature of the case against him, even in general terms, and could not tell what the prosecution witnesses were going to say until they gave their evidence. This necessarily put the defence at a grave disadvantage, particularly in cross-examination. It is true that a certain latitude was allowed to Mr. Pritt to recall witnesses for the prosecution after there had been some opportunity to check their stories, but this indulgence, granted reluctantly, was not the same thing as having the depositions in the hands of the defence several weeks before the trial opened.

On the assumption that it was necessary to try the case summarily, the injustice of this course might have been mitigated if full particulars of the charges had been given. These were applied for by the defence before the case opened, but were refused by the Magistrate, who said, 'To order the Crown to give further particulars would I consider be equivalent to ordering the Crown to show what evidence it proposes to give, and that I am not prepared to do.' A criminal trial is not a game of poker, and it is difficult to see why the prosecution should be permitted to conceal its hand from the defence until the last possible moment.

The venue of the trial, 280 miles from Nairobi, was no doubt chosen because of the Emergency, and not, as Mr. Pritt seemed to think, in order to torment him, but it must have increased considerably the difficulty of preparing the defence. Considering the burden imposed on Kenyatta, and the others tried with him, by the venue and by the prolonged and discursive nature of the case against them, it seems inexcusable of the Government to have limited the numbers of counsel they were allowed to engage.

It is particularly difficult without having seen the witnesses and without reading the full transcript to estimate the weight of the case against the accused. But reading this summary many people will be inclined to agree with Mr. Pritt's objection that 'practically all the evidence seems to be on the extreme edge or periphery of the case.' Of course the demeanour of the witnesses may have been decisive, but it is a remarkable fact that on one vital point the Magistrate accepted the evidence of a single witness for the prosecution and rejected the evidence of seven witnesses for the defence. If Kenyatta was the leader of Mau Mau, then no doubt any number of witnesses could have been induced by intimidation to perjure themselves on his behalf, but to assume that against him would be to displace the presumption of innocence, the most important principle of our criminal law.

To say that Kenyatta ought not to have been convicted on the evidence before the Court is very different from saying he was innocent of the charges. Even those like Mr. Slater, whose 'normal sympathies would be more likely to be on the side of the Kenya African Union' will find it difficult to be sure of that. The defence admitted that 'Mau Mau exists on a substantial scale and in a terrifying form.' If Jomo Kenyatta was not 'managing' it, who was? That is not a question that can be asked in a Court of Law, but it is one that the leaders of the Kenya African Union should answer.

Roland Brown.

## Aspects of Urban Administration in Tropical and Southern Africa.

By J. L. L. Comhaire. (University of Cape Town. 10s.)

How often have we not been told that urbanisation is a key subject and that information on this subject is coming in from every part of Africa; how often have we not noticed that the most lively and intelligent administrators gravitate towards the urban areas as African Affairs Officers or in some specialised capacity? Yet when we look around in search of some comprehensive treatise we meet either with a plethora of local reports on some technical issue wanting any sort of perspective or, if we ask for more, with the bland denial that the time is ripe for a more ambitious study of the problems of urban administration. At last someone has now tried his hand at a



critical summary of our knowledge. The author, already known as a compiler of two bibliographies on urban administration and within the pages of the Belgian periodical, *Zaire*, as the penetrating chronicler of events in Africa, has pulled together the essential data emanating from towns as far apart as Lagos, Leopoldville, Lusaka, and from East and South Africa. He discusses all the chief issues: the application of the principle of indirect rule in the urban setting and the justification and legal status of the practice of residential segregation, the management of transport and the rating of site values; he deals with social work, the public utilities, even with prostitution and crime. On all these items the author has something sensible to say. He is able to illustrate his points by a wealth of material which includes most happily, French, Belgian and Portuguese experiences. All this is set forth in a matter-of-fact way though not without an occasional whimsical aside. Here is a careful writer at work reared in the empirical tradition. A Belgian by origin, he has worked at Oxford and, during the last few years, at a New England university.

The book is severely administrative, using such sociological and economic considerations as are required but never going very far towards broad generalisations on the entire process of urbanisation which is colouring in one way or another all life in Africa. The multiplicity of subjects is given unity by the administrative approach and depth by the comparative method.

If the book has a fault it is its brevity. With almost monkish abnegation, a large world is pressed into small, austere space. And yet, this critical survey takes the reader far beyond any of the Hailey Reports and makes a useful companion to the recent study by Wraith on local government in Africa. The University of Cape Town is to be congratulated for including in its otherwise very 'academic,' and let us admit it dull, series this welcome, practical and lively addition.

Leo Silberman.

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## Our Heritage

By Jean Mellanby. (Crown Bird Series No. 40.)

This sketch of the history of Nigeria from the ninth to the twentieth century in nineteen printed pages suffers inevitably from the necessity for compression. The pamphlet skims hastily over most of the available material for Northern Nigeria, and dips lightly into the legends of the West. The East it ignores almost completely, and even in the areas dealt with, the omissions are grave.

The most serious fault is the lack of a comprehensible map without which the accounts of the different struggles in the North, and the grand sweep of the Fulani are meaningless. The map at the centre page is, like the illustrations, mainly irrelevant to the subject-matter. And for other omissions, what about Dr. Barth's 'Travels' and Rabi's raid into Bornu after Omdurman?

T. F. B.

## Corrigendum

In the first paragraph of Mr. Epstein's review of the book *The Judicial Process among the Barotse of Northern Rhodesia*, in the July issue, for *Northern Nigeria*, read *Northern Rhodesia*.

To the Editor of VENTURE.

Sir,

I have lately read in Basil Davidson's "The African Awakening" a horrible description of forced labour in the Portuguese colony of Angola. It appears that the so-called contract workers are forced by their chiefs to enter into contracts to work for a period for miserable wages and if their employers are not satisfied with their work they can send them to the police who often inflict corporal punishment. What makes the system the more inexcusable is that large profits are made by these employers who could well afford to pay sufficient wages to attract free labour. It is particularly unfortunate that British capital is invested in some of the companies which exploit the Africans in this way. Is Angola part of the 'free world'?

F. S. Tabor.

Evegate, Braintree.

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